

526 of them to get as many as eight arrows up before the first one reaches the ground.

526 For the successful use of the bow, as it is used through all this region of
224 country on horseback, and that invariably at full speed, the great object of practice is to enable the bowman to draw the bow with suddenness and instant effect; and also to repeat the shots in the most rapid manner. As their game is killed from their horses' backs while at the swiftest rate—and their enemies fought in the same way; and as the horse is the swiftest animal of the prairie, and always able to bring his rider alongside, within a few paces of his victim; it will easily be seen that the Indian has little use in throwing his arrow more than a few paces; when he leans quite low on his horse's side, and drives it with astonishing force, capable of producing instant death to the buffalo, or any other animal in the country. The bows which are generally in use in these regions I have described in a former Letter, and the effects produced by them at the distance of a few paces is almost beyond relief, considering their length, which is not often over three,—and sometimes not exceeding two and a half feet. It can easily be seen, from what has been said, that the Indian has little use or object in throwing the arrow to any great distance. And as it is very seldom that they can be seen shooting at a target, I doubt very much whether their skill in such practice would compare with that attained to in many parts of the civilized world; but with the same weapon, and dashing forward at fullest speed on the wild horse, without the use of the rein, when the shot is required to be made with the most instantaneous effect, I scarcely think it possible that any people can be found more skilled, and capable of producing more deadly effects with the bow.

231 The horses which the Indians ride in this country are invariably the wild horses, which are found in great numbers on the prairies; and have, unquestionably, strayed from the Mexican borders, into which they were introduced by the Spanish invaders of that country; and now range and subsist themselves, in winter and summer, over the vast plains of prairie that stretch from the Mexican frontiers to Lake Winnipeg on the North, a distance of 3000 miles. These horses are all of small stature, of the pony order; but a very hardy and tough animal, being able to perform for the Indians a continual and essential service. They are taken with the *lazo*, which is a long halter or thong, made of raw-hide, of some fifteen or twenty yards in length, and which the Indians throw with great dexterity; with a noose at one end of it, which drops over the head of the animal they wish to catch, whilst running at full speed—when the Indian dismounts from his own horse, and holding to the end of the *lazo*, chokes the animal down, and afterwards tames and converts him to his own use.

422 Scarcely a man in these regions is to be found, who is not the owner of one or more of these horses; and in many instances of eight, ten, or even twenty, which he values as his own personal property.